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844 never use them again. The placenta they put in a broken gourd and bury it at the corner of the house or under the threshold: in the case of a boy outside the house, and in the case of a girl within.

'After this then they wash[1] the baby and anoint it with oil, and they tie a girdle of rag around its little loins. When all is ready, then some step outside and begin to shout for joy (*oku ulula*) saying, *Ulú! Ulú! Ulú!*[2] There has come a great big man here. Or if the baby is a girl they say, *Ulú! Ulú! Ulú!* There has come a girl here! A girl for the pounding-rock, *we-e-e! Ulú! Ulú! Ulú!* We are very grateful that she has increased our number.

'When the people hear the shouting, they hasten with joy to greet the parents and to congratulate them. Some seize the hand of the male parent and greet him saying, You have done well, you have begotten[3] for us a youth for the road, and a gatherer of firewood for the club-house. In the case of a girl, they say, A girl for the pounding-rock, the grinding stone is dirty.[4]

'In case the woman had already borne before, it is usual for her just to do it all alone by herself. She herself cuts the (cord of the) navel and buries the placenta. Many prefer to give birth in the field. Should a child have been born in the field (the cord of) his navel may be cut with a blade of corn in case there is no knife at hand. To tie up the cord she may just tear a bit of rag from her own cloth. When she comes to the village, the people will notice that she carries her basket on her head and the child in her hand, and straightway they greet her.'

846 It will be seen from this that childbirth is nothing if not simple among the Ovimbundu. Immediately after giving birth the mother purifies herself by washing in a running stream. She is accompanied only by her mentor. There is a lying-in period (until the cord falls from the navel) to be observed by the child *and* the mother, but it seems that in these days it is often observed in the [539] breach. In the folk-tale of 'Baby and his Elder Sister' (*Ñaña la Kota liaye*), the mother did not observe her part of the taboo but left the house to Elder Sister, and it was perhaps for that reason that Baby took vengeance by eating up the beans left cooking on the fire while no one was looking.

[1] The water is warmed by being taken into the mouth and then squirted on to the baby.

[2] The sound made by plucking at the lips while shouting.

[3] The verb *oku cita*, to bear or to beget, is used of males and of females without distinction.

[4] i.e. needs attention.

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the fire, while no one was looking. Before going on to that period, the narrative will tell a little about the birth of

Twins (Olonjamba).[1] 'If twins are born, when they have finished cutting (the cords of) the navels they bury their placentas out of doors at a cross-road. After washing and anointing them with oil, they shout saying, *Ulú! Ulú! Ulú!* There have come here a man and a woman. When the people come, they begin while yet outside (the hut), to curse[2] (and continue) until they enter, cursing the parents. It is called *Ongombo*, The Diviner's Basket. In that way such children are followed about by all, that none of them may die. And all the time that such children are growing, it is done month by month. The parent comes out and begins to curse the people who are in the village, and then all come from their houses and follow cursing her.'

In the case of triplets, when they are weaned, one is given to the king.[3]

As soon as the midwives have finished their task, the father may come in and take up the child, but men do not 'like' to hold a child which is still 'red' (i.e. not yet black) and whose 'neck is not yet strong'. Should a woman abort (*pulumuisa*), or should the child be stillborn or die at birth, the loss is accepted philosophically, quoting the proverb:

Cinene ombenje akolovi hacimueko.
The main thing (is) the gourd jug, the shavings (are) nothing.

Should the mother also die, then they quote:

Olīsī ka kuatele, ocimunga ca enda lovava.
A fish (he) did not catch, the bracelet went with water.

Should a young woman complain that her baby is too small, the others may remind her:

Esaila olio osanji.
The egg that (is) the chicken.

Should she complain that her baby does not grow properly, they will say:

Ka ci kuli omõlã ombia, omõlã omunu o kula
It does not grow the child of (a) pot, (the) child of (a) person grows.

[1] Lit., Elephants. The reference is to the names given to twins: *Njamba* (Elephant), *Hosi* (Lion), or *Ngeve* (Hippopotamus).

[2] *Tuhãlã*, which literally means to call *hard* names.

[3] I knew of one such case in Civaka.

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lated either to cause the spirits to pass him by or to facilitate his cure. In adolescence young people discard the names with which they were born and name themselves (*oku lisapa*) according to their own choice. I have collected the explanations for about two hundred names.

The names of children are used, and that is one reason for choosing them with care, for the name will be heard often by the spirits. It is his superiors and those with whom he has respect-relationships whose names one may not pronounce. A child's name may be affected by whether there are recently deceased siblings, but he is not the reincarnation of such a one. Rather, he may reincarnate an ancestor. This is doubtless one reason for naming him after an ancestor. This, however, is a subject for treatment elsewhere.

The Period of Lying-in (Ocitete)[1]

'During lying-in the work of the mother is to cause the cord to fall from the navel of her child. On the navel she rubs castor-bean charcoal mixed with palm oil, or palm oil mixed with ashes, or with the soot from burning a sleeping-mat of reeds. A chicken feather is required from a wing or the tail, to dip it in the soot. That is done day by day until the navel is freed.' It must be noted that although a large percentage of the babies get infected navels, this does not seem to be as serious among the Ovimbundu as with us. 'For the bed of mother and baby are spread leaves that it may be soft, if possible leaves of the *ongonguila* tree. Over the leaves are spread a sleeping-mat (*esisa*) and some little cloths. During that time the mother does not sleep in the dark. The father must bring firewood and firelogs that it may be warm and light in the house, so that if the baby defecates in the night, it may be wiped properly.' No cloths or diapers are u[illegible] for babies either at this period or later. An additional reason given for having a good fire in the hut is that the baby is supposed to be very much afraid of the dark.

'During those first days the women come to entertain[2] the mother and to hold the baby. Some bring meal and meat, some meal and beans, some porridge and relish, some sour beer and

[1] *Ocitete* seems to be derived from *oku teta*, to cut, in reference to the cutting of the cord.

[2] *Oku poka*, to provide for and entertain, as for a guest.

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846 firewood. When they bring something, the mother thanks them saying, You have provided very well. She who brought supplies sits down and takes the baby and asks whether it is doing well. Conversing with the mother, she advises her how to attend to the baby, and then she returns the baby to its mother and bids her good-bye, saying, May you rest well. The mother replies *E-e-e*. Then she goes out and goes away. All who come do that. During all that time the mother cannot go out until the navel has healed. Then some day when another gives birth, she will do likewise, she will prepare food to go and greet the parent.'

853 *The Baby's Food, Drink, and Medicine*. 'From the time the baby is born they set its gruel (*ekela*) (on the fire), and when it is done they begin to feed (it to him). It is difficult to feed a baby because he struggles greatly, and so when they feed him they hold his little arms and legs and put the food in his mouth when he cries. The mother takes the gruel from the pot and first puts it in her own mouth to cool it with her saliva, then she takes it out and, with the crook of her finger, puts it into the baby's mouth. If the baby's mouth fills up and runs over, she wipes it up and throws it back again. When she sees that sleep has taken him away, she sucks the gruel from the child's mouth and spits it out on the floor. Then she wipes his face clean with a little water. This gruel is stirred up with unfermented beer (*ocisangua*) in place of water that it may be tasty.

757 'Likewise from the time of his birth they set aside for the baby
853 a little gourd or pot of beer (*ocisangua*), which is tasty, very tasty. Into that beer they throw some sweet-smelling medicine, as for instance *ocisangu*, *olukata*, *ocilombo*, and *okakonga*. That medicine helps that the stomach may not ache and that worms may not come. *Olukata* is useful for stopping diarrhoea. Should he not eat well, they put in *okakonga*. In giving him to drink they use a little piece of gourd. As with feeding him likewise, although he struggles they hold his little arms and legs and make him drink.' The chief purpose of the beer and the sweet-smelling medicines is to tempt the baby to eat and drink, for it is believed that a baby
[827] is born with its senses of taste and smell fully developed. In case of more serious, or supposedly more serious, trouble, these simple remedies do not suffice and the diviner (*ocimbanda*) will be consulted.

'Should the baby be sick in the belly, making a noise *cõlõlõ*,

633 One of the commonest forms of punishment for sorcery was, and still is, banishment. Only the chief could pronounce the death penalty. Charges of sorcery are sometimes brought today to civil courts and to church courts under the guise of "poisoning".(1)

781 776 171 There are obvious gaps in the information on Umbundu religion and magic e.g. on spirits other than those of ancestors; on ritual connected with the ancestors; on productive and protective magic; on the work of the medicine-man as distinct from the diviner, and on the functions of the two separate offices of family priest. From existing accounts, however, Umbundu magico-religious concepts would appear to have much in common with those of the peoples to the east of the Plateau, and many of the words used for these concepts *(ngombo, ahamba, wanga, nganga* e.g.) are in fact the same. These peoples have been described in another section of the Survey.(2)

THE LIFE CYCLE

852 114 Childs' chapters on infancy, childhood, and adolescence form the main part of his book, and his treatment of the subject is much more detailed and on a deeper level than information offered by other writers,(3) and should be consulted.

BIRTH

844 A woman remains in her husband's village for the birth of her children. During the first birth, she is generally assisted by older women of the village, usually relatives of the husband. No man is present unless delayed labour entails the presence of a medical practitioner, or a diviner. [845] Difficult delivery is said to be caused by broken taboos, adultery on the part of the mother, sorcery, or the woman's own refusal to give birth. There is little ceremony connected with childbirth, and a woman may give birth to her second and later children alone when she is in the fields. [846] There is a customary lying-in period until the cord falls from the navel, but this is frequently ignored today.

845 *Twins* are welcomed but are considered prodigies whose birth requires the administrations of an *ocimbanda*.(4) Soon after the birth, and every month while the children are growing, the whole village takes part in a ceremony to preserve their lives. In the case of triplets, one is given to the paramount chief.(5)

553 *Naming* usually takes place, in the case of a first-born, on the day of its birth. Childs notes several factors:

(a) The name *(onduko)* should have been borne by a relative, whether living or dead, whose character and state of well-being are satisfactory; sometimes the child may be considered the re-incarnation of the deceased relative after whom he is named.†

(1) Childs, personal communication. (2) McCulloch, 1951, pp.72-83.
(3) Hambly, (2) 1934, pp.212-33, and Cushman, 1944.
(4) Ennis, 1945. (5) Childs, 1949, p.83.

† [Childs, op. cit., p. 87-]